

Newport International Group Tokyo Fashion Trends on Analysis: Retail's grandest global designs

*Retailers are upping the design stakes to make their shops stand out from the crowd.
We look at some examples of stunning store exteriors from around the world.*



For bricks-and-mortar retailers, store design matters. The ever-increasing demands of shoppers who want to be inspired mean stores must make retailers stand out.

A store's interior design often generates plenty of attention, but a few retailers show off their design credentials with their buildings as well. While interiors are often still prioritized, shop exteriors are increasingly important and seen as a way of attracting shoppers in and helping to make a brand stand out.

Even shopping malls are becoming more architecturally interesting. For years, shopping centers were designed as windowless boxes, but now developers all over the world are coming up with more interesting shapes and designs.

Here are a few of the world's most inspirational retail destinations.

Starbucks, Dazaifu, Japan

What must be Starbucks' most interesting-looking store is nestled in Dazaifu, a small city in southern Japan. It is located near the Dazaifu Tenmangu shrine, which attracts 2 million tourists a year.

The coffee conglomerate commissioned architect Kengo Kuma to create the cafe, which is designed to resemble tree branches in a forest. There were 2,000 wooden sticks used in its construction.

Freitag, Zurich, Switzerland

Freitag is a Swiss bag label founded by two graphic designer brothers, Markus and Daniel Freitag, in 1993. They make bags from recycled truck tarpaulins, and in 2006 decided to go one step further, opening a store made of 19 recycled freight containers. It was designed by Spillmann Echsle architects.

Alexandre Herchcovitch, Tokyo, Japan

Brazilian fashion designer Alexandre Herchcovitch worked with architect Arthur Casas on the unique design for his store in Tokyo, Japan. The shop is in the Daikanyama district and features eye-catching graphic designs on the exterior.

Prada, Tokyo, Japan

The Prada Aoyama store in Tokyo was designed by architects Herzog & de Meuron. Many visit just to see the building, which is an imposing glass concoction. It has six floors, making it the largest flagship in retail in Japan, and is a five-sided shape with smooth curves throughout its interior. Its diamond-shaped glass panes vary between being flat, concave and convex bubbles.

Herzog & de Meuron says: “These differing geometries generate faceted reflections, which enable viewers, both inside and outside the building, to see constantly changing pictures and almost cinematographic perspectives of Prada products, the city and themselves.”

Olympia 66, Dalian, China

Olympia 66 is one of the huge new malls that are springing up across China.

Built by developer Hang Lung Properties and designed by Aedas architects, the complex will cover a total of 2.38 million sq ft across seven floors in the city of Dalian, Liaoning Province when it opens in November 2015.

The curving structure was designed to represent Chinese Tai Chi twin dancing carps, and it's a key example of the megamalls opening in developing countries. Despite not yet being complete, it has already won awards for its design and eco-credentials.

Projects such as this show there is still a big appetite for new shopping centres in China.

Apple, Istanbul, Turkey

Apple's stores are known for their minimalist design and its newest store in Turkey looks, from the outside, like a clean glass cube. It opened in early April and features a moat around the outside. The store is the first of several Turkish stores the technology giant is planning.

Selfridges, Birmingham, UK

One of Birmingham's most distinctive landmarks, the Selfridges building at the Bullring shopping centre was opened in 2003. Future Systems, who designed the £40m structure, lived up to their name and went for a sci-fi feel. The outer shell features 15,000 aluminium discs.